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A PRESERVATIVE AGAINST APOSTACY FROM THE COMMUNION OF THE Church of England.

Directed chiefly to the Lay-Members of it.

LONDON,
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A PRESERVATIVE AGAINST APOSTACY, &c.

THough the Credit of the ſo much ridicul'd and exploded Doctrine of *Paſſive Obedience* be ſufficiently retrieved and vindicated, in a late Book deducing the Hiſtory of it, and proving it by clear and inconteſtible Evidences to be the univerſal Doctrine of the Church of *England*, from the dawning of the happy *Reformation*, even to theſe times; yet I am not ignorant what a deadly Wound the late Behaviour of ſome, ſo contrary to their avowed Principles, may give at leaſt to ſome of the Lay-Members of our Church, whoſe Faith and Perſeverance perhaps may ſtagger, upon comparing the Practices with the Doctrines of ſome of their moſt eminent Spiritual *Guides*, upon which thoſe avowed Enemies of our Church, the *Romaniſt* and the *Atheiſt*, may take occaſion thus to accoſt them. "What think you now "(may the *Romaniſt* ſay) of your *Divines* of the *Church of England*, "whom you have had ſo much in Reputation; taking them to be "the onely Guides that can ſhew you the way to Heaven? How "fickle and unconſtant are they, like a Weather Cock, that turns "with the Wind, or as one expreſſes it, *calculating their Sermons "merely for the preſent Circumſtances, as if the Pulpit were but a kind of "a Weather-Glaſs, wherein the Doctrine of Obedience to Governours is "higher or lower, according to the Temperature or Variation of outward "Affairs:* Or, as another ſpeaks, *Shifting their Principles with their "Intereſts; and, to ſerve a turn, complying at one time with that which "they condemn at another.* They plead for the Prince as long as the "Prince does plead for them, and uphold their Intereſt. They can "boaſt of a fine, glorious, *temporizing Loyalty*, and exalt the Prerogative, as long as it defends their Honours and Preferments. But

" when that Shadow proves deficient, and withers like *Jonah's*
" Gourd, then with the angry Prophet they can fall to curſing:
" When the King hearkens not unto them, then with that revolting
" People they cry out, *What Portion have we in* David? *Neither have*
" *we Inheritance in the Son of* Jeſſe: *To your Tents*, O Iſrael! *Now ſee to*
" *thine own Houſe*, David.

" Thus your celebrated *Divines*, like other mutable Mortals, are
" given to change, though they have often repeated and ſounded
" in your Ears that Counſel of Wiſdom, *My Son, fear thou the Lord*
" *and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change.*

" But we are fixed and conſtant in our Principles, and immova-
" ble as a Rock, and ſo appear to be the genuine Sons of an infalli-
" ble Mother, true Members of the Church which is built upon the
" *Rock, againſt which the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail.* That which
" our Adverſaries brand with the name of *Errour*, and we call *Truth*,
" we ſtoutly and bravely own, and reſolutely maintain, even to the
" loſs of our Lives, and the ſhedding of our deareſt Blood; but that
" which they call *Truth*, when it diſſerves their *Intereſt*, they renounce
" as *Errour*, and bluſh and are aſhamed to own, publiſhing their
" Retractations in Imitation of the great Saint *Auſtin*: Whereas
" what he delivered was a palpible *Errour*, and confeſſedly con-
" trary; but what they have taught, is owned to be agreeable to
" the holy Scriptures: What he ſaid was ſpoken raſhly, and but
" once, and condemned by the Orthodox; but what they delivered
" was upon mature deliberation, and frequently repeated, (of
" which every Anniverſary was a Witneſs,) and the univerſal Doc-
" trine of the Reformed Church. Thoſe dry and inſipid Doctrines,
" which are too ſublime and metaphyſical for their Underſtandings,
" they quarrel with; whilſt that which they ſay we teach, and they
" condemn, when it proves *Argumentum ab utili*, they freely eſpouſe,
" condemning it in the *Theory*, but approving it the *Practick*; the
" *Depoſing of Kings* being (they tell us) the Doctrine of the *Church of*
" Rome, but the Practice of the *Church of* England; yea, and their
" Doctrine too; the Soul of Popery, being by I know not what *Me-*
" *tampſychoſis* tranſmigrated into a Proteſtant Church, whoſe Reli-
" gion is Intereſt, whoſe Godlineſs is Gain, whoſe Chriſtian Politicks
" are blended with *Machiavel's* Maxims, and the *Leviathan* Prin-
" ples, from whence they have learned and taught, like expert
" *Hobbiſts, That Power is originally in the Body of the People; that the*
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" *Foundation of all Government is laid in Compact; and that the Breach of* " *Conditions by one Party, dispenses with the Duty of the other, though con-* " *firmed by Sacraments, Oaths, and reiterated Promises; that a Prince* " *may be opposed in his Politick, though not in his personal Capacity; that* " *when Religion is a part of our Property, it may be defended; and that the* " *Determinations of Providence are to be followed; or that the Prosperity of* " *a Cause is a Mark of its Goodness.* Open your Eyes therefore, I be- " seech you, dear *Christians*, and behold the Vanity and Unconstan- " cy of your fallible Guides, and renounce their Conduct, and " trust your Souls with wiser and more faithful Leaders; abandon " their Errours, which, like the tremulous Light, are variable and " inconsistent, short-liv'd and vanishing; and embrace the Truth, " One and Uniform, Eternal and Infallible. Thus pleads the sly and insinuating *Romanist* on the one hand, and no less craftily talks the blustering *Atheist* on the other, who thus assaults our zealous Protestant:

" You see now what a magnificent Cheat and glorious Juggle " Religion is. You see how you have been imposed upon by the " *Men in black*, who do not believe themselves, nor their own Prin- " ciples, who tell you fine Tales of another World, and *an invisi-* " *ble* I know not what; of the Joys of Heaven, and the glories of " Paradise, with as much Art as the Heathen Fables describe their " *Elizium*; and terrifie and frighten you with the darkness and " horrour of the bottomless Pit, the unquenchable Fire of *Tophet*, " the Brimstone of the burning Lake, and that great Bugbear the " Devil; and *all* this either to allure or scare you to your Duty: " which they themselves do not regard. With what lively colors " have they painted out the Sin of *Resistence* and *Disobedience* to our " lawfull Sovereign? How execrable, how black and damnable " a Crime have they told us it is, Adultery and Murther, though " of a Crimson die, falling short of it? How often have they told " us, that we must submit not onely to a kind and gentle, but to " a froward Master; not onely to a good, but an evil Prince; " yea, though he commences a cruel and bloudy *Tyrant*, and per- " secutes his People, contrary to *Law* and *Justice*: That *Prayers* " *and Tears* are the Weapons of the Church; that Patient Suffe- " ring or Flight is her only Remedy, referring her Cause to God, " who is Judge of the World, who in his own time will work her

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" Deliverance, or make her Reward ſo much the more glorious;
" that we muſt ſubmit for the Lord's ſake, and for Conſcience
" ſake, and that *they that reſiſt ſhall receive to themſelves damnation.*
" Whereas 'tis too too evident, that they neither fear the one,
" nor regard the other; the moſt ſolemn Oaths and Engagements,
" the moſt ſacred Ties being all too weak to hold them within the
" bounds of Duty, which the Laws of God and the Land indiſ-
" penſibly bind them to; taking Counſel together againſt the
" Lord, and againſt his annointed, ſaying, *Let us break their Bonds*
" *aſunder, and caſt away their Cords from us.* To which I might add
" their expoſing and ridiculing their own *Loyal Doctrine*, ſtyling it
" *ſuperfine Loyalty*, which has a dangerous and fatal tendency to
" introduce *Arbitrary Power*, and ruine and enſlave the Nation.
" A *Doctrine* which they tell us now is monſtrous and abſurd, and
" which they ingenuouſly confeſs, they muſt repent of and recant.
" A *Doctrine* which they ſeverely anathematiſe, and are ſtartled
" and affrighted at; which muſt be baniſhed from their Pulpits,
" yea, and the Preacher too, that dares open his Mouth in Vin-
" dication of, or makes ſome modeſt Reflexions upon it, which is
" a Characteriſtick of an ill affected Man, a murmuring Grumble-
" tonian, one who cannot pronounce their *Shiboleth.*

" If theſe your ſpiritual Guides, your Preachers of Righteouſ-
" neſs, were miſtaken in thoſe Points of Divinity, which they have
" told us is warranted by the Word of God, how are you aſſured
" that they are not miſtaken in all the reſt?

" Reſume therefore your Reaſon which you have ſo tamely re-
" ſigned to your impoſing *Guides*, having cauſe to ſuſpect that all
" their Preaching is but elaborate Fable, a *Politick Trick* to amuſe
" your Heads, and empty your Purſes, and keep you in awe
" with the frightfull Stories of inviſible *Dæmons*, and that *Chimæra*
" *of Damnation.*

" Be governed by the Rules of Morals, be juſt to Men, and
" forget not to be juſt to your ſelves; be not, for the ſake of ſpe-
" culative Fancies, guilty of a ſneaking puſillanimous Self-denial,
" in point of Intereſt and Pleaſures which the World affords you,
" reſolving with St. *Paul's* Epicure, as the beſt Politicks, *Let us eat*
" *and drink, for to morrow we dye.*

Thus

Thus both the *Romaniſt* and the *Atheiſt* aſſault our zealous *Proteſtant*, who upon better grounds than the *High Prieſt* in the Goſpel, may rent his Clothes, and cry out, *They have ſpoken Blaſphemy*; they have blaſphemed God and Religion, reproaching the Mother for the fault of ſome of her naughty wanton Children who have ſuck'd her Breaſts, and been dandled upon her Knees, and at length, like *Jeſurun*, have waxed fat and kicked, and rudely given her the Lye, and ſpit in her venerable aged Face, and *threaten to bring down her gray Hairs with ſorrow to the Grave*; ſo that ſhe might juſtly complain in the words of the Prophet, appealing to the inanimate Bodies, *Hear, O Heavens, and give ear, O Earth! I have nouriſhed, and brought up Children, and they have rebelled againſt me.*

So that here lies the true *Gravamen*, the Root of the matter; and the old Proverb may be here inverted, *The Children have eaten ſowre Grapes, and the Parents Teeth are ſet on edge.* The Children have ſinned, and the Parent muſt ſuffer; they have offended, and ſhe is guilty, and muſt bear the Blame and Shame. Though indeed there is no more Reaſon to calumniate and reproach, to deſpiſe and deſert the *Church*, and our moſt *holy Religion*, becauſe of the undutifull Behaviour of ſome of her Children, than there is to pronounce *Jehovah* to be a falſe God, becauſe the *Iſraelites* turned Idolaters, and worſhipped graven Images, and the Hoſt of Heaven; or to affirm that *Jeſus Chriſt* was an Impoſtor, becauſe one of his Diſciples denied him, and the reſt forſook him, and fled. No wiſe man ever deſpiſed Preaching of the Goſpel, becauſe *Judas* was a Traitor; or the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, becauſe *Symon* the Sorcerer, a baptized Chriſtian, would have bought them with Money. No one ever thought the worſe of Chriſtianity, becauſe *Julian* turn'd Apoſtate, and many Chriſtian Kings and Prieſts imbib'd the *Arian Hereſie*. Even in ſecular Affairs we are not wont to condemn and utterly renounce the Thing, becauſe ſome Perſons have miſcarried in the uſe of it. The Mariner will not bid adieu to the Sea, and forbear to occupy his buſineſs in the great Waters, becauſe ſome have been loſt and ſhipwreck'd there. We do not curſe the Wind, and pray that it may blow no more, becauſe ſometimes it has overthrown Houſes and Steeples, and ſunk our Ships. We do not forſwear the uſe of Water, becauſe ſome have been

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drown'd; or Fire, becauſe ſome have been burnt by it, and our ſtately Buildings and Palaces have been turned to Aſhes. No one is ſo mad as to abandon his Trade, becauſe ſome who profeſs it turn *Bankrupts*. We do not abhorr, and for ever abandon the female Sex in the lawfull uſe of Marriage, becauſe ſome of the Daughters of our *Iſrael* turned Harlots, and are impudent and ſhameleſs Strumpets. Becauſe ſome are drunk with Wine, we do not therefore reſolve to drink no more and with the raſh *Lacedemonians*, to cut down all the Vines. Nor do we forbear Eating, becauſe ſome are gluttonous; nor abjure the uſe of Phyſick, becauſe ſome, for want of Government, have been deſtroyd by it.

And as abſurd it is in ſpiritual things to deſpiſe the Vertue, becauſe of the miſcarriage of the Vitious who have pretended to it. The Word of God is equaly precious, though 'tis the ſavour of Death unto Death to ſome, whilſt 'tis the ſavour of Life unto Life to others. 'Tis unreaſonable to deny the *Faith, becauſe ſome, having put away a good Conſcience, concerning Faith have made ſhipwrack.* They who deſert our Church, and deny the Faith, becauſe of the miſcarriages of ſome of their ſpiritual *Guides*, declare that they eſteemed the Meſſengers more than the Meſſage, or at leaſt the Meſſage for the Meſſenger's ſake; that they received what they preached as the Word of Man, and not as the Word of God.

What St. *Paul* ſaid to the Corinthians, that may I to ſuch Deſertors, or thoſe that are tempted to it, *Was* Paul *crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of* Paul? So ſay I, Was it ſuch or ſuch a ſpiritual *Guide*, was it ſuch or ſuch a *Reverend Doctor* or *Paſtor*, that was crucified for you? Or were you baptized in his Name? Is it his Word, is it his Goſpel you received and believed? Is he the Captain of your Salvation? Is he the Authour and Finiſher of your Faith? If ſo, then indeed you may cry out, *I-chabod, The Glory is departed from Iſrael.*

But hear what was Saint *Paul's* Senſe of this matter, 2 *Cor.* 2. 1, *&c. And I, Brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of Speech, or of Wiſdom, declaring unto you the Teſtimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, ſave Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified, and I was with you in Weakneſs, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my Speech and my Preaching was not with enti-*

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ing words of Man's Wisedom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power. That your Faith should not stand in the Wisedom of Men, but in the Power of God. And, Chap. 3. 5. how does he debase himself, and his Brother *Apollo*, as weak Instruments in the hand of the powerfull God, as Ministers, and not Lords of the Faith of Christians, ascribing all the Honour and Power to God, who is the Author of Faith, and Giver of Grace, who by his Almighty Influences and heavenly Blessing, gave Increase to what *Paul* had planted, and *Apollo* watered: *Who then is* Paul, *and who is* Apollo, *but Ministers by whom ye believe? I have planted*, Apollo *watered, but God gave the Increase; so then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the Increase.*---- So far was he from assuming, as *Simon Magus* did, the proud and swelling Character of the *Great Power of God.*

And that they might not mistake him to be an unerring Guide, and infallible Leader, the Ἀρχιποίμην, the chief Sheepherd, he cautions them, Chap. 11. 1. *Be followers of me*, says he, not simply and absolutely, but καθὼς κἀγὼ Χριστοῦ, *as I also am of Christ.* He did not require an implicit Faith and Obedience, merely on the account of his Authority, but exhorted them to follow him, as far as he did preach and act consonantly to the Rules of the Gospel: if otherwise, if he should have receded from his own Principles, and acted contradictorily to Gospel Faith and Manners, he did not desire or expect to be followed; nay, he implies that they should not follow him; nay, instead of following him, he allows that they should curse him with the greatest Malediction, with the severest Anathema.

How vehemently positive and express is he in this Case! Gal. 1. v. 8. *Though we, or an Angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed:* Yea, to signifie how vehemently earnest and sincere he was in what he said, he doubles it over again, v. 9. *As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other Gospel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be accursed.*

Whatever they doe in the Church of *Rome*, yet we allow no such Doctrine in the Church of *England*, as *implicit Faith and Obedience*; i. e. to believe as the Church believes, and to doe as she doe, be it good or bad, right or wrong. Faith sure it was not to

when the Church of *England* was in its ancient Glory, when not bewitched, and beguiled by the Serpent's Subtilty, when not corrupted *from the simplicity that is in Christ*.

Every private Christian is allowed to try and judge for himself, to try the Doctrines and Practices of Men by the Word of God, with the noble *Bereans*, to search the Scriptures, whether these things are so. 'Tis not enough that such or such an eminent *Divine* says or does so and so: Be it an *Apostle*, or an *Apostolical Man*, or *Pope*, or a *Cardinal*, a *Bishop*, or a *Presbyter*, or whosoever he be, that makes the greatest figure for Learning and Piety; if he recedes from his own Principles, which he has delivered and we received as Principles of Honesty and Justice, and consonant to the Rules of the Gospel; if he speaks and acts contradictorily and inconsistently with himself, and the Standard, the Rule of Gospel Faith and Manners; follow him not, reject him, conform not to his Example; (*i.e.* in those Instances of his Errour,) he is an *Ignis fatuus*, a deceitfull Light; he will lead you into Bogs and Pits, and upon the Precipice of Destruction. I'll not follow an Apostle any further than he follows Christ; for Man, and the best of Men, is but a fallible Creature. Be followers of me, says *St. Paul*, as far as I am of Christ, who is an infallible Guide, an unerring Leader, the great *Sovereign Example* which God hath set forth in his Word, to be imitated by Christians, to which they owe, and must pay a simple and absolute Conformity, and that in all the Instances of doing and suffering; so says St. *Peter*, 1 Pet. 2. 21, 22, 23 *For even hereunto are ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an Example* (the great Example of Passive Obedience) *that we should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his Mouth: Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him who judgeth righteously.* Him we must chiefly eye and look to, as the bright Morning Star, the Pillar of Fire and the Cloud to lead us through the Wilderness unto *Canaan*. So the *Apostle* directs the *Hebrew Christians*, Heb. 12. 2. Having in the former verse exhorted them to follow the example of the Saints, whom he styles a Cloud of Witnesses, yet considering that the Example of the Saints is but the Example of fallible men, he therefore points to a surer, a more Unerring Guide and infallible Leader, *Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who*

who for the joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the Throne of God.

But *Jesus* is in *Heaven*, whom then must we follow upon Earth?

I Answer. Follow your spiritual Guides (though mistaken in other things (as far as they follow *Christ*, *who is the way, the Truth, and the Life*, *Let God be true and every Man a Lyar*. Truth will stand though Men fall, being like the great Mountains which God hath Eltablished for ever.

'Tis unaccountable folly and madness therefore, to renounce the Truth of God, because of the Errours of men, who are *Vanity and a Lie*, to abandon Religion because of the failings of the Religious. 'Tis unreasonable to desert a Church because of the miscarriage of some of her ministers, especially such a Church (as ours of *England* is) which by plainest and clearest Title is Heir apparent to the true and Rightfull successour to that of which Christ himself is the Chief corner stone: A Church sufficiently purged from the Remainder of the Heathenish and *Jewish* Rites, and the corruptions and superstitions of *Rome*, *by Him whose fan is in his hand, and who hath throughly purged his floor*, who with [illegible] his Evangelical scourge hath driven the profane out of his House of Prayer, which they made a Den of Thieves. A Church whose Doctrine is Orthodox, whose Worship is Primitive and Apostolical, whose Ceremonies are few and modest, decent and significant, whose Government is prudent and moderate, neither too severe nor too loose; neither Tyrannical nor Licentious: In a word, a Church keeping the Golden Mean between *Scilla* and *Carybdis*, the dangerous Extremes of Superstition and Enthusiasm. And they who basely desert and forsake such a Church, the Curse of a provoked God and an Abused Mother will light upon them.

And though some of her *Sons* have given Scandal and Offence, (though that is no Warrant neither to desert the Church,) yet I dare affirm that there is *a Considerable Number* (*though perhaps it cannot be said as God did to Elijah when he complained the Children of Israel have forsaken thy Covenant, thrown down thine Altars, and slain thy Prophet with the Sword, and I even I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away whom God comforted with this Assurance, yet I have left*

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me 7000 in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, *and every mouth which hath not kissed him,*) yet, I say, I dare affirm, that there is a considerable number of as great and good, and pious, and as learned men, who have not flinched or stirred a tittle from the old Gospel Loyal Principles of the Church of *England*.

" And though in following their Principles (to use the words of " a Reverend Divine) they endanger their worldly Interest, and " fall under the Disgrace of a Rabble and the Persecution of a " prevailing *Faction*, yet their very Enemies will be forced to reve- " rence and honour them, to acknowledge that they are constant, " and brave, and honest, and resigned to their own Principles. " Who, remember, had once the Rule over you, who have spo- " ken unto you the Word of God, whose Faith follow.

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